Como Regional Park Advisory Committee – July 12, 2011 Meeting Notes

Updates on neighborhood communication strategies and local issues:

- The Como Shuttle Lot has an address of 1670 Como Avenue on the Como Zoo and Conservatory website. People can search for directions on Map Quest. Steve Grans reports (post meeting) that it should probably be 1660 Como Avenue. That information has been passed along to the Campus Manager.
- The Como Pool project is on schedule. There has been a on-going issue with vandalism and theft.
- The Hmong Sports Festival went off with very few complaints that reached the Parks department or the Mayor's Office. Steve Grans reports that the parking lot (blk 55) that was used at the State Fair grounds was very clean when State Fair crews went to pick-up trash on Monday. Paul reports that there were lots of cars parked in the permit parking areas during the event. Steve indicated that there were still two signs on Snelling directing people to Hmong Festival parking. They were removed as of the next morning.
- SALT Seniors and Law Enforcement Together, a partnership between Saint Paul Police, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and community residents will officially kick-off on Friday, July 15. A meeting that includes information provided by Parks and Police staff, along with the issuing of T-shirts and name tags will take place at the Como Lakeside Pavilion at 10am Friday. SALT volunteers and SPPD officers will begin foot patrols and provide notification flyers for park visitors educating them on the dangers of leaving personal items in their vehicles.

Como website design discussion:

- Parks staffer Meghan O'Hare led a discussion about web pages connected to Como Park. This was a continuation of a discussion initiated at the June meeting. Committee members were asked to provide feedback about an assortment of web pages, both those that are currently live and some that were provided as examples. Committee members offered lots of great feedback which included:
 - 1. suggestions about links from the main page
 - 2. ...the fewer clicks the better
 - 3. Provide additional detail about the trails...distances, where they go...there is pretty good information about trails around the lake, but not for other trails.
 - 4. There wasn't much information about the putt-putt golf course.
 - 5. Consider using "flicker" for photos and enlarge photos.
 - 6. Como Golf Course has the best photos (slide show)...create the feel of the park through pictures.
 - 7. Use visually clear, big, bold text for the main line of each landing page.
 - 8. The web pages need more photos in general.
 - 9. It was difficult to find Como Pool.
 - 10. Better maps will go a LONG way.
 - 11. The basic blue banner on the City's web pages doesn't do Como Park justice.
 - 12. Perhaps there could be a video tour of the park...some 360 degree videography.
 - 13. After watching for quite a while, I didn't see any animals on the Como Zoo web cam.
 - 14. Como Town has a web cam.
 - 15. Web pages could be more interesting and interactive.
 - 16. The main Como Park page should greet the visitor...consider that this is the home page for the premier regional park in Minnesota. Could we do a version of the "brochure style" page as a main page but with fewer words, more photos and perhaps some "buttons" to make it easy to get to other pages?

Meghan will send out statistics related to how many times the various parks pages are visited. She will also send out a couple of examples for the group of other sites that have recently been updated and will keep working with the group for additional feedback as web pages are developed or improved.

Signage and wayfinding

The discussion started with a look back at meetings of the group involved in the Como Transportation Plan. It seems that some of the reasons signage came to be included were anecdotal. People were coming out of the meetings and couldn't find their car! There seemed to be an assumption (which may still exist today) that everyone knows where everything is in Como Park. People involved in the Como Transportation Plan meetings wanted consistency, but clearly wanted more signage. Signage and wayfinding always rose to the top of the lists in the surveys and at open houses…even higher on the list than parking.

Kathy reports that there is some money left in the Federal Transportation Grant that can be used for signage and wayfinding in Como Park. Grant funds will be matched at 80/20 and must be used by the end of 2012. Kathy also reports that funding for a plan related to signage and wayfinding has been deemed an appropriate use of these funds.

The committee is in support of developing a signage and wayfinding plan for the whole park. Some of the following ideas and requirements will be important to this committee:

- 1. Develop a brand and image that we want. (Does the City own the design plan for ES Heritage Park?)
- 2. Look at what other systems have done in their regional parks.
- 3. Make sure the plan is something that could be consistent with other parks...could be expanded to include the entire parks system.
- 4. Develop an inventory list of all the park spaces that will need signs.
- 5. Prioritized phasing will be an important part of the plan.
- 6. Be clear about the scope of the work...make sure there is a relationship between the signage and the branding in the park, as well as with the web pages.
- 7. Be sure to give this project a web page as it moves forward.
- 8. This committee has an interest in developing and reviewing the RFPs, as well as in selecting the vendor and/or in being part of the design task force.

The group wishes to move forward with a resolution for the Parks and Recreation Commission in support of using some of the Federal Transportation Grant funds to develop a plan for signage and wayfinding in Como Park. Dan Marckel will report on this at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting on July 13. The committee suggests that the District Councils be notified about the planning and are provided an opportunity for feedback. Kathy will work with the Parks Public Information Officer to do so.

Next meeting: Tuesday, August 9 from 6:30-8pm. The meeting is tentatively planned to be held at the Historic Como Streetcar Station. It *may* be moved to accommodate internet access and a bigger viewing screen. Notice will be provided in advance if this is the case.